



## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **13 November 2012**

Committee Members Present: Joy Cipriano, Wayne Cox, Marti Chick-Ebey, Eric Endries, Pete Fairchild, John Gately, Libby Kendrick, Arnold Lorea, Peggy Mertz, Burnie Peters, John Pritchard, Tony Soltys, and Bill Tucker.

City Representatives Present: Will Moffett, Ann Bane, and Bruce Sturk

Visitor: Mike Hodson (lieutenant colonel, US Army, retired) and former Fort Monroe public affairs officer.

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Review and Approval of 9 October 2012 Minutes.
- III. Veterans Day Observance.
- IV. Meet a Member of the MAC: Burnie Peters.
  - A. Originally from Parkersburg, West Virginia, he attended Howard University in Washington, DC, where he was first introduced to the military. All male students who were not military veterans were required to participate for two years in the Reserve Officers Training Corp (ROTC). Near the end of his sophomore year, he decided to pursue a double minor and not take advanced ROTC. A few days before the selection was to be made for the advanced class, he received a letter from the U.S. Draft Board. That letter caught his attention. He immediately volunteered for the advance program. Then, in the summer between his junior and senior years, he attended ROTC summer training at Langley Air Force Base -- His first extended visit to the "Confederate" South.
  - B. He enjoyed the experiences on Langley AFB, but hated his off-base experience. He vowed never to return to Hampton. "Never ever." Upon graduation from Howard University, he was commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and assigned to Shaw AFB, SC. Once again, he headed to the "Confederacy." He made up his mind to be very positive and make the best of his off-base experiences. Despite his best efforts, after three months, he could take it no longer. He went to personnel seeking a new assignment. There was a

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need for navigators. Although he had never thought about being a navigator, he immediately volunteered. He met the qualifications and was away from South Carolina and off to navigation training. After several USAF Training Command assignments, he earned his "wings" and began his career as a navigator/bombardier. This led him to the Strategic Air Command and over two thousand hours in the B-47 Bomber. In 1964 while stationed at Lockbourne AFB, Ohio, his B-47 Wing was deactivated and all of their three man crews were reassigned to other B-47 bases. However, the three navigators whose last names started with the letter "P" were given by-name assignments to special classified programs.

- C. His assignment was to a special flying group in Germany -- very exciting. He and his family spent "four exciting and wonderful years" in Germany. He had departed the United States before the Civil Rights Laws were passed. Therefore, he requested reassignment outside of the south. His next orders were to Pope AFB, NC. Burnie had just been promoted to Lt Colonel and knew he was in good standing with the Commanding General. Very determined not to subject his children to the "Confederacy," after expressing his feeling about going to Pope AFB, the orders were cancelled and a new assignment was requested. The next assignment was to Langley AFB. He felt that he should not push his luck and accepted the orders to Langley.
- D. He and his wife, Betty, decided to enroll their children in the neighborhood schools and see if that would be a problem. If so, he would ask to be reassigned. "Thank God, due to the Civil Rights Laws, this was not the South we had experienced." There was no problem enrolling his children and his wife was hired as an elementary school teacher. This was in 1968. In 1972 he learned that Hampton had integrated the schools in 1968 and at Langley Elementary school, there were "only five people who looked like me" (African-Americans) -- three daughters, my wife and one other teacher. What a surprise!"
- E. Burnie retired from the Air Force at Langley and had a second career at NASA Langley. Wife Betty retired from the Hampton School System as an Elementary School Principal. Burnie mentioned he's enjoyed the Military Affairs Committee, as it has given him an opportunity to give something back to the City of Hampton. He concluded by saying, "We love Hampton," and chuckling, "but never say "Never!"

### V. Chairman's Remarks.

- A. Met with the local Region V Wounded Warriors Program to address a series of seminars or conferences the MAC and they might co-host in the coming calendar year 2013. Issues addressed included PTSD, TBI, Suicide and Suicidal Ideations, Sexual Harassment in the Military, Veteran Homelessness, Education, Family Support, Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence. See VII B for information on the next meeting.
- B. Special thanks to Peggy Mertz, Pete Fairchild and Jim Wilson who represented the MAC in the Saturday, October 13, 2012 Phoebe Days Parade. John regrets having missed that event, but he wanted to ensure that he could attend the funeral of Lieutenant Colonel (US

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Army, retired) Lee A. Lewis, Sr., which occurred the same morning. He appreciated seeing fellow MAC members Chuck Valliant and Burnie Peters at that funeral, a celebration of the life of a great American and inspiration to us all.

- C. The plans of our governor, Bob McDonnell, and his First Lady, Maureen, to attend a Freedom Support Center (FSC) "Key Exchange" ceremony at 10 AM, Monday, October 29th, had included a very specific request that veterans be invited to the Fort Monroe event. While we had worked to meet this request with some success, the event was cancelled because of concerns about disruptions caused by Super Storm Sandy.
- D. Meetings will continue on the Veterans' Construction Project. As addressed at our last meeting, through the Hampton MAC, a local Home Depot (the firm willing to break anonymity) is offering its help to local (preferably Hampton-based) veterans in need. The firm will provide both labor and materials. Their intent, at this stage of the planning process, is to plan for projects they can perform over the coming year.
- E. Co-op apartment offer. A family has recently offered an apartment located at Atlantic Shores Senior Community in Virginia Beach, to a charity; especially one organization whose mission is to aid military veterans. We earlier solicited ideas for proper disposition yet no charity has been able to express an willingness or ability to accept the property. As a result, the family has had to explore other options for disposition and has withdrawn the offer.

### VI. Upcoming Events

- A. From 1 - 2 PM, Thursday, November 8th meeting with Kadetra Cooper, Marketing, Outreach, and Public Relations Specialist of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program for Region 5, Greater Hampton Roads at 1919 Commerce Drive, Suite 450 in Hampton.
- B. Wednesday, November 14, 2012 - 9 AM to 5:45 PM at the Fort Eustis Club, 2123 Pershing Avenue, hosted by the 733 Mission Support Group, a Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Employers Conference. The Virginia Employment Commission reports that the event designed to introduce companies to how to actively recruit, retain, and retain veterans ("the best of the best America has to offer" as well as how to navigate through the military transition programs and take advantage of Government Funding to reimburse your organization for training and on-boarding expenses. Attendance is encouraged for companies of all sizes who are vet friendly and want to become vet strong.
- C. 8 AM, Friday, November 30th. MAC Chairman will address a Hampton Community Leaders Breakfast in the City Council Chambers, on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall. Other MAC members and local VSO's members are encouraged to attend.
- D. 3 PM, Friday, November 30th, Governor and Mrs. Bob McDonnell will attend "The Passing of the Keys" to The Freedom Support Center ("FSC"), at 3 Ruckman Road at

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Fort Monroe. THE FSC is described as "a highly collaborative, 'one-stop' service facility for active, reserve, and National Guard service members, their families, and our veterans." MAC members, veterans and interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

- E. Peggy Mertz has taken the lead, assisted by Arnold Lorea, in early preparations for the Hampton Holly Days Parade this year. The step-off is 7 PM, Saturday, December 8, 2012 with a parade route from City Hall to Darling Stadium. October 25th was the entry deadline.
- F. Honor Flight. Perhaps we ought to plan to support the Honor Flight Historic Triangle program in the future, perhaps in April 2013, if they have a trip scheduled then.

### **VII. NEW BUSINESS. CITY STAFF REPORTS, UPDATES AND REVIEWS.**

- A. The City continues to work issues surrounding the accident-prone part of the active runway for departures and arrivals of military aircraft. The intent is to prevent nonconforming land uses and development inside the CZ. Ultimately this will keep citizens safe as well as potentially prevent any future base realignment and closure activity at LAFB.
- B. Bruce provided an update regarding the Salvation Army's (SA) Homeless Veteran transitional housing program. The SA continues to look for alternative locations to administer this program. Presently the SA is leasing a facility from the Hampton VA Medical Center (HVAMC). The facility is scheduled for demolition and the lease will expire the first part of 2013. The HVAMC has plans to locate appropriate housing for the Homeless Veterans enrolled in the SA program before the lease expires.
- C. Bruce also provided an update regarding the city's concerns with the potential of a State Veteran Care Center being located at Fort Monroe. As previously mentioned, the city is very veteran-friendly and believes a State Veteran Care Center is critical to Hampton and the surrounding localities in Hampton Roads. The city's primary concerns with a Veteran Care Center at Fort Monroe are directly related to safety issues such as flooding and evacuations in severe weather conditions.

**Next Regular MAC Planning Session: 11 AM, Thursday, 6 December 2012  
Lawson Conference Room, 8th Floor, City Hall**

**Next MAC Meeting: 5 PM, Tuesday, 11 December 2012  
1st Floor Veterans Conference Room, Ruppert Sargent Building, 1 Franklin Street, Hampton**